

STEERING, LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

January 6, 2014

5:30 p.m.

Courthouse

MINUTES:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Jack Black  
Commissioner Gary Farley  
Commissioner Trey Gooch  
Commissioner Jeff Jordan  
Commissioner Allen McAdoo  
Commissioner Steve Sandlin  
Commissioner Adam Coggin, C

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ernest Burgess      Joe Carr  
Virgil Gammon      Mike Sparks  
Lisa Nolen      Bill Ketron  
Scott Porterfield      Jim Tracy  
Robert Arnold      Dawn White  
Laura Bohling      Robert Stevens  
Steve Schroeder      Susan Allen

Don Odom, Paul Overholser, Travis Johnson, Tiffany Johnson, Phil Griffin, Lisa Duke Crowell, Jeff Sandvig, Lisa Nolen, Becky Shelton

Chairman Coggin presided and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with all members being present at that time.

MINUTES:

"Commissioner Gooch moved, seconded by Commissioner Farley, to approve the minutes of the last meeting as mailed. This motion passed unanimously by acclamation."

ANNUAL MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS:

Representatives Joe Carr, Mike Sparks and Dawn White and Senators Bill Ketron and Jim Tracy met with the Steering Committee for the annual meeting.

Senator Tracy first advised in 2014 the priority will be the budget and it is going to be a tight budget year. Tennessee has no debt on its roads or bridges and wants to keep that status. The State and pensions are in good shape.

Representative White advised she enjoyed working with the Commissioners over the last year and wanted to hear any concerns. She advised education reform, jobs and the economy are important.

Representative Sparks advised as a former Commissioner he sees mandates as a concern. If the State passes something then it needs to provide a way to pay for the mandate. Big issues for Representative Sparks are drugs and education.

Senator Ketron advised a tough budget year at the State tends to trickle down to cities and counties. Projected revenues are down for the year mostly due to the F&E tax but the State is moving forward to eliminate the death tax and Hall income tax. The State is also reducing the sales tax on groceries. The legislative term ends April 6 this year so it is a short session.

Representative Carr advised local issues of interest will include the Urban Growth Boundary which is approaching its expiration, wine in grocery stores, regulations on HOA's and the County Finance Act may be reviewed.

Commissioner Farley advised he heard of an upcoming bill where the State would get involved with County borrowing and asked for details. Representative Carr advised there is concern regarding some municipalities defaulting on bonds and the State does not want to have to step in and pay the same. The Comptroller is trying to be proactive. This situation would not apply to Rutherford County or Murfreesboro and if the bill hurts Rutherford County Representative Carr advised he would vote against the same. Senator Ketron advised there are currently no counties on the watch list but there are eleven

or twelve municipalities and the State will proceed cautiously and welcomed input. The question is who is responsible if a municipality defaults. Is it the County and if the County defaults is it then the State that should pay.

Commissioner Sandlin advised he thought the State needed to kick in some money to help build schools.

Commissioner Sandlin also advised as to maintenance of effort it seemed the State could help out across the board on this as maintenance of effort can be a budget killer and is an unfunded mandate. Senator Ketron advised it may be time to look at maintenance of effort as well as the BEP and higher education funding.

Commissioner Sandlin inquired as to the discussion regarding capping teachers' salaries. Senator Ketron advised the Governor has not given the State of the State address yet so this was not known. Senator Tracy advised the salary capping came from the State Board of Education and not the Governor.

The Committee was advised if the County has something to be submitted then it needs to be at the House by the first week of February and asked that any bill being sent be directed to one individual with a copy to the others to get filed properly. Senator Ketron advised the County should go by the House deadline. Senator Tracy advised the Legislature is moving quicker this year in session than in the past.

Commissioner J. Jordan advised as to Private Acts who they should be directed to and Representative Carr advised to send to whoever the issue was discussed with that agreed to carry the request forward.

"Commissioner J. Jordan moved, seconded by Commissioner Black, to suspend the rules and allow School Superintendent Don Odom to address the Legislators. This motion passed unanimously by acclamation."

Superintendent Odom advised he has reviewed the salary plan of the State Board of Education which caps teacher pay and the Rutherford County School Board is working on a pay plan for this County. The State Board plan does not include any raises between years one and six and Mr. Odom is afraid the system will lose good teachers if they don't try to help those just starting to teach. Additionally, the State Board plan caps pay at year 11. Rutherford County pays above the State minimum level. Senator Tracy advised he represents four other districts and they do not pay above the State minimum level like Rutherford County.

Superintendent Odom also advised he has a concern on State authorized charter schools as each County has an elected School Board for a reason. Senator Tracy advised he thought attention needed to be paid to career technical schools.

Representative Sparks advised he sees a disconnect in the TEA. The government has been on an unsustainable path and needs to think outside the box such as virtual schools. The legislators will be talking about the same problems with the Committee next year if things are not fixed.

Commissioner J. Jordan advised he was aware the teacher pay change came from the State Department of Education but someone will be blamed and he wants to keep the best teachers possible in the classroom. Senator Ketron advised \$55,800,000 funded BEP. Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System is ranked fifth in the country and is 93% funded. The Federal government has advised it needs to be funded at 100%. TennCare funding is another concern.

Commissioner Gooch asked if the availability of meth ingredients would be addressed. Senator Tracy advised he does see the Legislature addressing meth issues and the purchase of ingredients to manufacture the same. Senator Ketron advised it would have to be a statewide application on purchases. Representative Carr advised he had TBI stats that 80% of meth in Tennessee is manufactured in Mexico and he wants to be careful passing legislation because the problem has not been addressed. Representative Sparks advised you cannot legislate out of problems.

Commissioner Robert Stevens ask about students being allowed to use the lottery money for Summer classes instead of having to wait for the Fall. The megatronics program at Motlow would benefit from students being able to access the funds earlier. Representative Carr advised a bill is to be introduced for this issue.

Mayor Burgess advised there is still work to be done on defining a newspaper of general circulation and what constitutes a proper legal notice.

Commissioner Robert Stevens encouraged progress on an interchange at Sam Ridley in Smyrna. Senator Tracy advised this involves the Federal government because of the interstate but it is moving forward. Representative White advised it is a twelve year process but it is being pushed.

FILL VACANCY ON INSURANCE COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE:

Chairman Coggin advised an application had been received from Virgil Gammon for reappointment to the Insurance Committee as employee representative. Following discussion,

"Commissioner Farley moved, seconded by Commissioner Black, to recommend Virgil Gammon for reappointment as the employee representative on the Insurance Committee. This motion passed unanimously by acclamation."

FILL FOUR VACANCIES ON PUBLIC BUILDING AUTHORITY:

Chairman Coggin advised applications had been received from James H. Bailey, III, Steve Waldron, Phil Griffin, Stan Vaught and Edward Scott Porterfield for appointment to the Public Building Authority. Mr. Griffin and Mr. Porterfield were in attendance and addressed the Committee. Following discussion,

"Commissioner Sandlin moved, seconded by Commissioner Farley, to nominate all five applicants and vote for four. Commissioner Black voted for Porterfield, Bailey and Waldron advising he was abstaining from voting for a fourth person due to working with Mr. Griffin; Commissioner Farley voted for Porterfield, Bailey, Waldron and Vaught; Commissioner Gooch voted for Porterfield, Waldron, Griffin and Vaught; Commissioner J. Jordan voted for Porterfield, Bailey, Waldron and Vaught; Commissioner McAdoo voted for Porterfield, Waldron, Griffin and Vaught, Commissioner Sandlin voted for Porterfield, Waldron, Griffin and Vaught and Chairman Coggin voted for Porterfield, Bailey, Waldron and Vaught. Edward Scott Porterfield and Steve Waldron each received seven votes; Stan Vaught received six votes; James H. Bailey, III received four votes and Phil Griffin received three votes. Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Waldron, Mr. Vaught and Mr. Bailey will be recommended for appointment to the Public Building Authority."

ANNOUNCE VACANCY ON CONSERVATION BOARD:

Chairman Coggin advised the position of Chuck Clark on the Conservation Board was expiring and accordingly being announced.

DELINQUENT TAX PROPERTY SALE COMMITTEE:

Mayor Burgess advised the County has three delinquent tax properties currently that can be disposed of and next year will have seven more. The Committee was provided a copy of T.C.A. 67-5-2507 whereby a Committee can be established to dispose of these surplus properties. The bill provides for a Committee of four members elected by the County legislative body, from the County legislative body, who, together with the Mayor, shall place a fair price on each tract of land for which price the land shall be sold. Mayor Burgess asked that the Property Management Committee have the authority to serve as the Delinquent Tax Property Sale Committee but a legal opinion is needed from the County Attorney and/or the State Attorney General authorizing the same since the Property Management Committee has more than four members. In the alternative, Mayor Burgess asked that the Mayor and four Property Management Committee members serve as the Committee. Following discussion,

"Commissioner Sandlin moved, seconded by Commissioner Farley, that if a legal opinion so advises, the County Mayor and Property Management Committee serve as the Delinquent Tax Property Sale Committee. If not permitted, then the County Mayor and four members of the Property Management Committee be designated as the Delinquent Tax Property Sale Committee. This motion passed unanimously by acclamation."

There appearing to be no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Coggin declared the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

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ADAM COGGIN, Chairman